

Montana Department of Transportation



# WHITEFISH

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN URBAN CORRIDOR STUDY OF U.S. 93



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### PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the City of Whitefish have initiated a community-wide transportation planning process. This process will assist both entities, as well as the community at large, in guiding transportation infrastructure and implementation over the planning horizon (the year 2030). The City of Whitefish has numerous transportation related issues that affect the efficiency and operational parameters of the existing transportation system.

Additionally, there are numerous available lands directly adjacent to the City proper that could develop over the future years and possibly result in additional transportation impacts to the community's residents. This is coupled with the lack of good east/west connectivity in the community, as well as limited crossings of the Whitefish River, and the railroad tracks. All of this has necessitated the urgency of this planning effort.

Although a variety of transportation planning has taken place in the community over the years, this is the first comprehensive, citywide effort. Transportation is a major concern to city residents today. The city expects concern to remain high as growth continues and the challenges of accommodating travel needs become more difficult. A comprehensive

Transportation Plan will provide an opportunity for city and state officials, staff and residents to work together to develop the innovative approaches necessary to plan and implement a transportation system that will serve the city of Whitefish well into the future.

A component of this traditional transportation planning effort is the preparation of an Urban Corridor Study of US Highway 93 through the downtown. This component of the overall project will focus on the downtown environment and both local and through traffic needs. Coordination with the community's *Downtown Master Plan* and the recommendations for livability, aesthetics, and land use will be conducted. This work effort will review the information completed in the *U.S. Highway 93 – Somers to Whitefish Final Environmental Impact Statement (1994)* relative to current conditions and future plans.

The goal would be to analyze reasonable design options and develop a preferred design option based on the original Environmental Impact Statement purpose and need. The corridor limits being studied begins on U.S. Highway 93 at 13th Street, continues north on Spokane Avenue to 2nd Street, continues west on 2nd Street, and ends just west of Baker Avenue.

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## TRANSPORTATION PLAN URBAN CORRIDOR STUDY OF U.S. 93

### WHO ARE THE PLAYERS IN THE PROJECT?

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is the primary entity responsible for overseeing the progress of the Consultant on the development of the Transportation Plan and Urban Corridor Study of U.S. Highway 93. A multitude of other constituents are also participating in this cooperative study. These participants include the City of Whitefish, Flathead County, and a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The development of this Transportation Plan / Urban Corridor Study includes an extensive public involvement process. This process has been designed to encourage public involvement and meaningful participation. Several public outreach activities will be held on the project over the course of the project's development. These public outreach activities will be devoted to defining relevant issues, presenting preliminary findings of the analysis and studies of the existing transportation system, as well as population, employment and demographic changes.

Additional public venues will be held after the draft plan has been published to discuss elements contained in the draft, and a public hearing will be held before the Plan is produced in final form and adopted. Check the *Whitefish Pilot* and the website ([www.mdt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish](http://www.mdt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish)) periodically for information relating to the time and location of future public events.

At this time, there are two initial public forums scheduled. Both will be held on Monday, April 16th, 2007. These will be introductory public opportunities that will allow the Consultant to introduce the projects, talk about schedule and logistics, and to hear feedback from the community on issues important to its citizens. The time and place for these meetings are as follows:

#### **Public Meeting Number 1**

**Date:** April 16th, 2007 (Monday)

**Time:** 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**Location:** Whitefish City Council Chambers 402 East Second Street

**Purpose:** Project introductory meeting to learn about the projects being developed. The public will be given the opportunity to discuss issues important to them regarding transportation, whether vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and/or other forms.

#### **City Council Presentation Number 1**

**Date:** April 16th, 2007 (Monday)

**Time:** 7:10 pm to 8:00 pm

**Location:** Whitefish City Council Chambers 402 East Second Street

**Purpose:** Brief project presentation to the City Council regarding scope, schedule, and initial public comment.

### WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT?

The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive, community-wide Transportation Plan for the City of Whitefish. This Transportation Plan is intended to facilitate achieving community goals and improve the transportation infrastructure and services within the Whitefish area to meet the needs of current and future residents. This Plan will address all modes of transportation in a balanced attempt to meet the current and future transportation needs of the community, while complying with state and federal requirements. Specifically, the Transportation Plan / Urban Corridor Study of Highway 93 will achieve the following overall objectives.

- ➔ Coordinate transportation planning with existing and future land use and community comprehensive plans.
- ➔ Improve regional transportation circulation and identify primary travel demands.
- ➔ Promote a safe, reliable transportation network for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and the disabled.
- ➔ Identify improvement priorities, implementation strategies and policies.
- ➔ Identify funding sources and implementation process.
- ➔ Develop a preferred design option for the U.S. 93 Corridor in Whitefish.

### CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed by the Whitefish City Council at their meeting held on March 5th, 2007. The following members and alternate members, were appointed to the CAC.

#### **Members:**

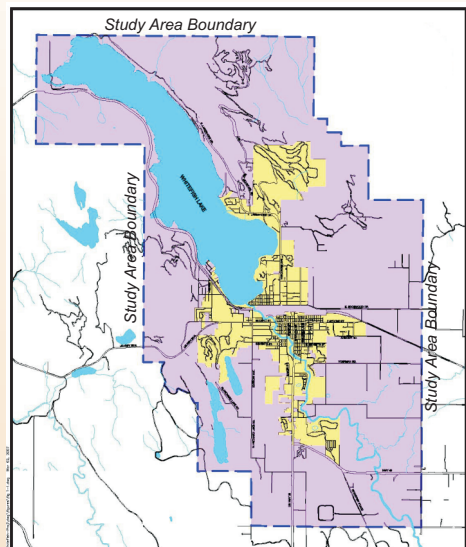
Mike Ferda	Don Spivey	Fred Jones
Monte Gilman	Jerry House	Sabine Brigetta
Shirley Jacobson	Dale Duff	Gary Stephens

#### **Alternates:**

George Gardner, Mary Person, Mary Jo Look

## STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

The project only examines transportation issues within the "Study Area Boundary". The boundary follows the planning boundary in the ongoing *Growth Policy Update* that the City is developing. The accompanying graphic shows the project Study Area Boundary.



## PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project schedule is an eleven-month time frame. The project schedule began on January 1, 2007 and strives for a final document and project completion near November 30, 2007.

The Consultant will begin the process of collecting data for the baseline traffic conditions for the study area in March, 2007.

## UPCOMING WORK TO BE PERFORMED

A variety of work is ongoing and some items have yet to be started. It is important to realize that the ultimate product to be generated for this project will be a Transportation Plan and Urban Corridor Study that will guide future transportation system needs and improvements in the Whitefish area through the year 2030. The following items will be addressed over the coming months.

- Traffic and other project data will be collected and analyzed to identify any problem areas and/or deficiencies.
- An intricate traffic model for the future planning horizon (year 2030) will be developed and will be used to analyze the adequacy of the transportation system for the expected future growth in the Whitefish Area.
- Improvements to "multi-modal" transportation systems will be analyzed.
- Preliminary recommendations to the overall transportation system will be developed.
- Funding mechanisms for recommended improvements will be developed.
- Recommended improvements will be prioritized.
- Public participation activities will continue to be offered.
- Draft and Final Transportation Plan and Urban Corridor Study documents will be offered.

## WEBSITE INFORMATION

### Project Website:

[www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish)

### MDT Website:

[www.mdt.mt.gov](http://www.mdt.mt.gov)

### City of Whitefish:

[www.whitefish.govoffice.com](http://www.whitefish.govoffice.com)

[www.planitwhitefish.com](http://www.planitwhitefish.com)

### Flathead County:

[www.co.flathead.mt.us](http://www.co.flathead.mt.us)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the project contact:



### **Jeff Key, P.E.**

*Manager, Traffic & Transportation Division*

### **Robert Peccia & Associates**

825 Custer Avenue

P.O. Box 5653, Helena, Montana 59604

Phone: 1-800-667-8160 (8 am to 5 pm)

Email: [jeffk@rpa-hln.com](mailto:jeffk@rpa-hln.com)



### **Karin Hilding, P.E.**

*Assistant City Engineer*

### **City of Whitefish**

418 E. Second Street

P.O. Box 158, Whitefish, MT 59937

Phone: 406-863-2450 (8 am to 5 pm)

Email: [khilding@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:khilding@cityofwhitefish.org)

Montana Department of Transportation



### **Sheila Ludlow**

*Project Manager*

### **Montana Department of Transportation**

Statewide and Urban Planning Section  
2701 Prospect Ave.

P.O. Box 201001, Helena, MT 53620-1001

Phone: 406-444-9193 (8 am to 5 pm)

Email: [sludlow@mt.gov](mailto:sludlow@mt.gov)

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## TRANSPORTATION PLAN URBAN CORRIDOR STUDY OF U.S. 93

### TO COMMENT ON THIS PROJECT

- ▣ Attend the Public Meetings
- ▣ Visit the Project Website
- ▣ Email the Project Manager
- ▣ Call Robert Peccia & Associates Toll Free Number

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